

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **April 24, 2006**

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Barody
Mason
Stec
Champagne
F. Thomas
Kenny

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Monroe

Others Present:

Representing Warren County Economic
Development Corporation:
Leonard Fosbrook, President
Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional
Incubator Business
John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury
Industrial Park
William H. Thomas, Chairman
Nicholas Caimano, Budget Officer
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Supervisor VanNess
Supervisor Gabriels
Supervisor Sheehan
Supervisor Merlino
Supervisor Geraghty
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Barody called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Stec, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2006 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Fosbrook, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Referring to Item I of the Agenda, Mr. Fosbrook apprised the annual luncheon was a success with 230 people in attendance and 26 sponsors. He further noted the membership list was continually growing which evidenced significant support from the private sector. He commented they brought their Annual Report today which he found much more informative than in previous years. (A copy of the Annual Report is on file with the minutes). In an effort to improve the luncheon in future years, Mr. Barody suggested limiting the time as many attendees could not stay for the duration of the luncheon.

With respect to Item II, and in conjunction with the design of their new logo, Mr. Fosbrook explained they were reviewing how they conducted business internally and had developed a number of concepts to become more efficient. He said Mr. Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional Incubator Business, had been instrumental in creating a new reporting system and they anticipated establishing a new operations manual as well.

Mr. Wohl explained their intent was to build the capacity of the organization making sure the efforts they initiated and carried forward were valued most by the people who utilized the EDC (Economic

Development Corporation), as a resource. Internally they focused on standard reporting formats, creating historical archives, creating databases for the website users, and really becoming the clearinghouse of Economic Development so people could stay abreast of any developments within the organization, noted Mr. Wohl. Furthermore, he said, they continued to monitor 15 external projects they had currently undertaken either by taking the lead or actively supporting their involvement. He stated they would report to the Board of Supervisors any issues that arose, update the committee on the various projects, as well as provide ongoing business assistance to anyone who came to the organization. Mr. Wohl expounded the website was not only a facade of the organization but a tool assisting the dissemination of information to members and interested parties.

Mr. Champagne commented that he had read in the paper South Glens Falls had requested all 9th grade students be required to take a course in business education and he hoped it was just the beginning before other schools followed. Mr. Barody added the curriculum material was important and thought EDC could influence the substance of what was being brought forward. Mr. Wohl mentioned the Adirondack Business and School Partnership was currently developing an economic curriculum for teachers, as well as making this a component of the regional incubator. He said they were attempting to bridge the gap between the theoretical courses taught at Adirondack Community College (ACC) and the practical experience being carried out within the community.

Mr. VanNess entered the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

Referring to Item III of the Agenda, Mr. Fosbrook stated his department had compiled different reports for the various projects they were working on. He explained the reports summarized the outcome of the major activities, the necessary steps to be taken, milestones, the time frames associated with the project and a status report.

Mr. Fosbrook extended the floor to John Wheatley, Project Manager of the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP). Mr. Wheatley advised at a meeting held on March 29, 2006, the National Guard reiterated their commitment to the project. He apprised the National Guard was currently at 35% design capacity and pursuing the land closing; however, he added it now resided with the Attorney General's Office.

Mr. W. Thomas entered the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Mr. Wheatley informed the committee the National Guard easement for the road had been obtained from National Grid. In addition, he said, they compared archeological reports and investigations that were ongoing, noting that SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) expressed a further investigation of the quarry.

Messrs. W. Thomas and Caimano exited the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

Despite the cooperation of the weather, Mr. Wheatley reported the commencement of Phase II had been delayed. He indicated the National Guard was somewhat flexible with respect to the timing of construction of the facility, waiting until possibly July 2007. By commencing construction in 2007, Mr. Wheatley related, it would enable EDC to commence road work a little later, recruit more interest in the park and look for additional funding options.

Due to the revised time line discussed at this meeting and the facilitation of Jim Clark from Congressman Sweeney's Office, Mr. Wheatley apprised a meeting was scheduled with the Lake George/Lake Champlain Regional Planning Board to discuss the possibility of pursuing an EDA (Economic Development Agency) grant for the park. He explained EDC was required to prepare a document to submit to EDA for their review and approval. If EDA invited EDC to apply for a formal application, he noted the entire process could take three or four months which could significantly benefit the funding gap on the road.

With respect to the infrastructure and road construction, Mr. Wheatley advised another meeting was held with the project engineers relative to the design, facilitation and bidding process. He said the engineers suggested EDC investigate pursuing a phased-in gravity sewer system supplemented with a pressure sewer system for the first several occupants of the park until there was a critical mass that required a higher capacity system such as a pump station. Mr. Wheatley remarked this procedure had been done in other parts of the Town of Queensbury and saved a considerable amount of money. He added the engineers were consulting with the Town of Queensbury to ensure the feasibility of this phased-in sewer system.

With respect to marketing the QIP (Queensbury Industrial Park), Mr. Wheatley commented he had prepared a prospectus that was forwarded to local and regional developers, as well as real estate contacts. He said he was in the process of obtaining feedback and meeting with people in hopes of generating possible interest.

Messrs. W. Thomas and Caimano re-entered the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Mr. Champagne inquired if EDC had discussed the QIP with area developers and the potential tax relief with the Town of Queensbury. Mr. Fosbrook replied the Park was within the Empire Zone which automatically qualified them for tax benefits. In addition, Mr. Fosbrook related EDC would work with the Warren/Washington Counties Industrial Development Agency (IDA) for bonding, if necessary. In summation, he stated they had the road designed, bid documents prepared and a timetable that was "liveable".

Mr. VanNess exited the meeting at 10:59 a.m.

Besides the National Guard, Mr. Mason asked if there were other potential purchasers interested in the Park and Mr. Fosbrook responded the marketing process had just begun. Once the road issue was resolved, Mr. Barody related they would aggressively commence marketing the Park.

Mrs. Parsons and Mr. VanNess entered the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Mr. Champagne complimented the EDC for a well-planned and thought out status report that he would like to see all committees receive. Mr. Barody noted this format did not fit every committee but for any time-sensitive project, this report worked well.

Mr. Gabriels inquired if Warren County was still the back-up funding source if the grant did not come through and Mr. Fosbrook replied affirmatively; however, if it was in the 2007 construction season, he noted it could go into next year's budget.

Referring to Item V of the Agenda, Mr. Fosbrook apprised EDC was responsible for securing the

temporary structures for the vendors, as well as defining and hiring security for the New York State Association of Fire Chief's Convention. Mr. Fosbrook outlined the five outstanding issues with respect to the convention on page 4 of the Agenda. He informed the committee the insurance company and attorneys requested a vendor agreement that would secure the position of anyone in the area of the structures. The Director of Americade had refused to sign the agreement, claiming they never intended to use the tents, added Mr. Fosbrook. Mr. Fosbrook explained he had a current total bill for security of approximately \$25,000 for the NYS Association of Fire Chief's Convention which they had committed to, as well as additional security for the time periods when events were not taking place. He said they were required to obtain additional insurance which amounted to \$7,000 and an additional \$2,000 had been incurred in legal fees that he would like to have written into the current contract with the County, which only covered the acquisition of the tent structures. With respect to the NYS Association of Fire Chief's Convention, Mr. Barody explained EDC was acting as a pass-thru and none of these items were in their budget; therefore, they would have to meet with the Budget Chairman and Executive Host Committee for funding reimbursement.

Mr. Sheehan entered the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Mrs. Parsons related the Executive Host Committee recommended EDC bring back to this committee security quotes so they could move forward on a contract. Mr. Fosbrook stated his department utilized the voucher system which could be verified. He indicated they were looking for \$25,000 for security and \$10,000 to cover insurance and legal fees.

Motion was made by F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously approving an increase in the Hudson River Local Development Corporation contract with Warren County for the New York State Association of Fire Chief's Conference for up to \$35,000 as outlined above. (Please note: A resolution request form was not needed.)

With regard to Item VI of the Agenda and pursuant to the last EDC committee meeting, Mr. Wohl advised they had met with web designers attempting to make the EDC website more functional. He commented they decided to set up a competitive process inviting people to submit proposals on scope, scale and cost. Referring to page 2 of the report on website design, he noted there were no major issues and the anticipated completion date was October 2006. Mr. Wohl said they would appreciate receiving any comments or suggestions relating to content and appearance. Mr. Barody added they had studied other states with robust economies to see how they were functioning and delivering services so they could better serve the community.

There being no further business before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Stec, Mr. Barody adjourned the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Legislative Office Specialist